

CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

- 5 1. A system for providing a backup power supply status indication to a user device, comprising:
an access device receiving a supply of main power from a main power supply, said access device
adapted to interface with a communications network;
a backup power supply coupled to said access device and adapted to supply backup power to said
access device when the supply of main power fails, and said backup power supply providing a signal indicating
10 a power condition of said backup power supply when the supply of main power fails;
a processor unit receiving said signal, and said processor unit generating a backup power supply status
indication in response to said signal; and
at least one user device coupled to the access device, said user device adapted to receive and/or
transmit information over the communications network via the access unit, and the user device receiving the
15 backup power supply status indication.
2. A system as in claim 1, wherein the user device is coupled to a user interface to communicate
the status indication in a user-recognizable manner.
- 20 3. A system as in claim 1, wherein the status indication comprises an indication that the backup
power supply is on.
4. A system as in claim 1, wherein the status indication comprises an indication that the backup
power supply is low on power capacity.
- 25 5. A system as in claim 1, wherein the status indication comprises a voice message indicating the
backup power supply status.

6. A system as in claim 1, wherein the status indication comprises an audible sound associated with a backup power supply status.

7. A system as in claim 1, wherein the access unit is an EMTA.

8. A system as in claim 1, wherein the access unit is a cable access unit.

9. A system as in claim 1, wherein the user device is selected from a phone set, a computer, an answering machine, and a television.

10. A system as in claim 1, wherein a plurality of user devices are coupled to the access device.

11. A system as in claim 1, wherein the access device is physically located out of visual range from the user device.

12. A system for providing a backup power supply status indication to a client device comprising:
an access device, coupled to a client device;
a main power supply coupled to said access device;
a backup power supply coupled to said access device, said backup power supply adapted to provide a first signal indicating a power condition of said backup power supply; and
a warning unit adapted to receive said first signal, said warning unit adapted to provide a first warning to said client device in response to said first signal.

13. A system as in claim 12,
wherein said backup power supply is adapted to provide said first signal when said backup power supply is supplying power to said access device; and
wherein said first warning indicates that said backup power supply is supplying power to said access device.

14. A system as in claim 13, wherein said backup power supply is adapted to provide a second signal when said backup power supply is low on power capacity, said warning unit providing a second warning to said client device, said second warning indicating said backup power supply is low on power capacity.

5

15. A system as in claim 14, wherein said backup power supply is adapted to provide a third signal when said backup power supply has a power capacity below a predefined operational limit, said warning unit adapted to provide a third warning to said client indicating said backup power supply is in a non-operational state.

10

16. A system as in claim 15, wherein said system is a telephone communications system.

17. A system as in claim 15, wherein said system is an Internet access system.

15

18. A method for providing an indication of the status of a backup power supply to a client device, said backup power supply coupled to an access device, said access device providing a service to said client device, said method comprising:

a) reading one or more power supply status signals from a primary power supply and a backup power supply;

b) determining from said power supply status signals whether said backup power supply is in one or more predefined alarm states;

c) returning to step (a) of reading when said determination indicates said backup power supply is not in any of said predefined alarm states; and

d) providing a communication to said client device when said determination indicates said backup power supply is in one or more of said predefined alarm states.

20

19. A method as in claim 18, said method further comprising the step of:

e) displaying, on a user interface coupled to said client device by said client device, an indication that said backup power supply is in one or more of said predetermined alarm states.

20. A method as in claim 19, wherein one of said predetermined alarm states is the state of said backup power supply supplying power to said access device.

21. A method as in claim 19, wherein
said backup power supply has a reserve capacity; and
wherein one of said predetermined alarm states is the state of said reserve power being equal to or less than a predefined low reserve power level.

22. A method as in claim 19, wherein
one of said predetermined alarm states is the state of said reserve power capacity being equal to or less than a predefined non-operational reserve power level.

23. An apparatus comprising:
an access device having a communications network interface, a user device interface, a processor unit interface, and a power supply input; and
a processor unit having:
a signal input adapted to be coupled to a power condition signal output of a backup power supply when the backup power supply is coupled to the access device power supply input; and
a backup power supply status indication signal output operably adapted to be coupled to a user device when the user device is coupled to the access device user device interface.

24. An apparatus as in claim 23, wherein the power supply status indication signal output comprises a voice message indicating the backup power supply status.

25. An apparatus as in claim 23, wherein the power supply status indication signal output comprises an audible sound associated with a backup power supply status.

26. An apparatus as in claim 23, wherein the access device is an EMTA.

27. An apparatus as in claim 23, wherein the access device is a cable access unit.

28. A method for providing a backup power supply indication in an access device, said access device having a power supply input and a user device interface, said method comprising:

a) reading a power condition signal output from a backup power supply operably coupled to said power supply input;

b) determining from said power condition signal output whether said backup power supply is in one or more predefined alarm states;

c) returning to step (a) of reading when said determination indicates said backup power supply is not in any of said predefined alarm states; and

d) providing a backup power supply status indication signal to said user device interface when said determination indicates said backup power supply is in one or more of said predefined alarm states.

29. A method as in claim 28, wherein one of said predetermined alarm states is the state of said backup power supply supplying power to said access device.

30. A method as in claim 28, wherein one of said predetermined alarm states is the state of said backup power supply having a reserve power being equal to or less than a predefined low reserve power level.

31. A method as in claim 28, wherein one of said predetermined alarm states is the state of said backup power supply being one of disconnected, nonresponsive, or failed.

32. An access device for providing messages to a user device comprising:
a network interface unit having an interface to receive network communications signals and a signal output to provide a first communications signal;
interface circuitry having an input to receive user device communications signals and an output to provide a second communications signal;
a processing unit having an input coupled to said interface circuitry output and a storage output to provide control signals;
a storage unit having a first input coupled to said network interface unit signal output to receive network-originated messages, said storage unit having a second input coupled to said processing unit storage output to receive said control signals, said storage unit having an output to provide said received messages responsive to said control signals; and
a line driver having a first input coupled to said network interface unit signal output and a second input coupled to said storage unit output, said line driver having a drive output to provide said first communications signal and said received messages.

33. An access device as in claim 32, wherein said processing unit has a second input to receive power supply status signals, said processing unit having a second output coupled to a third input of said line driver to provide a power supply status indication, said line driver drive output to further provide said power supply status indication.

34. An access device as in claim 33, wherein said storage unit output provides at least one received message responsive to a user device assuming an off-hook state.

35. An access device as in claim 34, wherein at least one of said received messages comprises at least one of a public announcement, a weather announcement, a subscription service message, a voice mail message, and a warning message.

36. An access device as in claim 34, wherein at least one of said received messages comprises at least one of a tone and a melody.

37. An access device as in claim 34, wherein the access device is an EMTA.

38. An access device as in claim 34, wherein the access device is a cable access unit.

39. A system for providing a backup power supply status indication to a user device, comprising:
a line driver having a power input to receive power and a network interface to receive communications signals from a communications network;

a backup power supply having a power output coupled to said line driver power input, said backup power supply adapted to supply backup power to said line driver when the supply of main power fails, said backup power supply having a status output to provide a signal indicating a power condition of said backup power supply;

a processor unit having a first input coupled to said backup power supply status output, said processor unit having a first output to provide a backup power supply status indication in response to said signal, said processor unit first output coupled to a second input of said line driver;

a storage unit having a first input to receive messages from said communications network, said storage unit having an output coupled to a third input of said line driver to provide a received message; and

at least one user device having an input coupled to a drive output of said line driver to receive at least one of the backup power supply status indication and one or more of said received messages.

40. A system as in claim 39, further comprising:

interface circuitry having an input coupled to an output of said at least one user device, said interface circuitry having an output to provide an indication that a user device has assumed an off-hook state, said interface circuitry output coupled to a second input of said processing circuitry, said processing circuitry having a second output coupled to a second input of said storage unit to provide a control signal, at least one of said received messages provided by said storage unit output in response to said control signal.

41. A system as in claim 40, wherein the backup power supply status indication comprises an indication that the backup power supply is on.

42. A system as in claim 40, wherein the backup power supply status indication comprises a voice message indicating the power condition of said backup power supply status.

43. A system as in claim 40, wherein the backup power supply status indication comprises an audible sound associated with the power condition of said backup power supply status.

44. A system as in claim 40, wherein the line driver and processing unit are contained in an EMTA.

45. A system as in claim 40, wherein the line driver and processing unit are contained in a cable access unit.

46. A system as in claim 40, wherein the user device is selected from a phone set, a computer, an answering machine, a facsimile machine, and a television.

47. A system as in claim 40, wherein a plurality of user devices are coupled to the access device.

48. A method for delivering messages in a communications network, said communications network including an access unit, said access unit including a storage unit, said access unit coupled to at least one user device, said method comprising:

receiving, by said access unit, a message from said communications network;

storing said received message in said storage unit;

detecting an off-hook state of a user device by said access unit; and

providing said received message to said user device in response to said detection of said off-hook state.